

# **Bible Study November 15, 2023**

## **1 SAMUEL 7 – ISRAEL’S PROPHET, JUDGE, AND PRIEST (ESV)**

***<sup>1</sup> And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. And they consecrated his son Eleazar to have charge of the ark of the LORD.***

The Ark was taken to Kiriath-jearim for safekeeping, and Eleazar was given the task of caring for it. Why wasn't it taken back to the Tabernacle at Shiloh? Shiloh had probably been defeated and destroyed by the Philistines in an earlier battle (4:1-18; Jeremiah 26:2-6) because of the evil deeds of its priests (1 Samuel 2:12-17). Apparently, the Tabernacle and its furniture had been saved, because we know that the Tabernacle was set up in Nob during Saul's reign (21:1-6) and in Gibeon during the reigns of David and Solomon (1 Chronicles 16:39; 21:29-30; 2 Chronicles 1:2-3, 13).

***<sup>2</sup> From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.***

### **Samuel as a Prophet**

***<sup>3</sup> And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashteroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.”***

Baal was believed to be the son of El, chief deity of the Canaanites. Baal was regarded as the god of thunder and rain, thus providing a source for vegetation and agriculture. Ashtoreth was a goddess of love and war (she was called Ishtar in Babylonia and Astarte or Aphrodite in Greece). She represented fertility. The Canaanites believed that by the sexual union of Baal and Ashtoreth, the earth would be magically rejuvenated and made fertile.

### **Isaiah 42:8 (ESV)**

***<sup>8</sup> I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other,***

The Ark was put away like an unwanted box in an attic, and it seemed as if the Lord had abandoned his people. Do you ever feel as if God has abandoned you? Ask yourself if he has already told you to do something and you've been ignoring his advice. You may not receive new guidance from God until you have carried out his previous directions with a willing heart.

Samuel urged the Israelites to get rid of their foreign gods. Idols today are much more subtle than gods of wood and stone, but they are just as dangerous. Whatever holds first place in our lives or controls us is our god. Money, success, pride, material goods, a relationship, a cause, technology, our image, or anything else can be an idol if it takes the place of God in our lives. The Lord alone is worthy of our service and worship, and we must let nothing rival him. If we have “foreign gods,” we need to ask God to help us dethrone them, making the true God our first priority.

***4 So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroath, and they served the LORD only.***

### **Samuel as a Judge**

***5 Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you.” 6 So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, “We have sinned against the LORD.” And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.***

### **Exodus 20:3-4 (ESV)**

***3 “You shall have no other gods before me. 4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.***

### **1 John 1:9 (ESV)**

***9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

Pouring water on the ground “before the LORD” was a sign of repenting from sin, turning from idols, and determining to obey God alone.

Samuel became the last in the long line of Israel’s judges, a line that had begun when Israel first conquered the Promised Land. A judge was both a political and a religious leader. God was Israel’s true leader, while the judges were to be God’s spokespeople to the Israelites and administrators of justice throughout the land. While some of Israel’s judges relied more on their own judgment than on God’s, Samuel’s obedience and dedication to God made him one of the greatest judges in Israel’s history.

### **Samuel the Priest**

***7 Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines.***

***8 And the people of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.” 9 So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.***

***10 As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel.***

**Exodus 19:18-19 18 (ESV)**

*18 Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. 19 And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.*

***11 And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car. 12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till now the LORD has helped us."***

**Psalm 54:4 (ESV)**

*4 Behold, God is my helper;  
the Lord is the upholder of my life.*

**Psalm 72:12 (ESV)**

*12 For he delivers the needy when he calls,  
the poor and him who has no helper.*

**Psalm 118:7 (ESV)**

*7 The LORD is on my side as my helper;  
I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.*

The Israelites had great difficulty with the Philistines, but God rescued them. In response, the people set up a large stone as a memorial of God's great help and deliverance. During tough times, we may need to remember the crucial turning points in the past in order to help us through the present. Memorials can help us remember God's past victories and gain confidence and strength for the present.

***13 So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.***

***14 The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.***

In Joshua's time, the Amorites were a powerful tribe scattered throughout the hill country on both sides of the Jordan with a heavy concentration occupying the east side of the Jordan River opposite the Dead Sea.

***15 Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 16 And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places. 17 Then he would return to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he judged Israel. And he built there an altar to the LORD.***